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PROGRAMME PLANNING

Country and intercountry programme and projects

FOURTH REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (1992-1996)

Note by the Administrator

I. THE PROGRAMMING PROCESS

Within the Latin America and Caribbean region, two separate consultative processes were initiated to contribute to eventual formulation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP's) fourth regional programme. In the case of the Latin American countries, the process involved Governments, high-level experts from the public and private sectors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) research centres, multilateral development banks and agencies of the United Nations system. In the case of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Council of Ministers of the Community are charged with specific responsibility for managing the consultative process with respect to formulation of the regional programme. After these processes, UNDP presented an Advisory Note with two distinct components to a joint UNDP and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) collective consultation with Governments, agencies and other multilateral institutions held in January 1992. After these consultations were completed, the programme was endorsed by Governments as a single regional programme. The process of collective consultations with the countries was very rich and fruitful. UNDP proposes to maintain this dialogue through all stages of implementation and evaluation of the regional programme.

II. APPROACHES AND OBJECTIVES

The basic challenge facing the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is to take advantage of the opportunities presented by a world in the process of democratization. It is a singular challenge in the history of the region. It requires that democracies be strengthened, economies modernized and poverty reduced while, at the same time, the region opens itself to full participation in international causes. "Human development" is a central concept that captures and gives energy to the initiatives that can help define the most appropriate path that democracies - which must contend with weak economies - must take if they are to ensure sustainability.

These themes were underscored during the programming process that led to the formulation of the Advisory Note for the Latin American and Caribbean programme. This process entailed a mid-term review in 1989 and a collective consultation with Governments and agencies in 1990, both of which recommended six priorities for action which were examined during thematic sessions with Governments, experts, NGOs and agencies during 1991. Their recommendations were reviewed and endorsed by the January 1992 collective consultation, as outlined below.

These objectives for the regional programme, which have been determined by the region's Governments, are substantially in accord with those proposed by the Governing Council of UNDP for particular attention by member countries of the organization. While the acknowledged similarity of the development problems confronting the countries of the area has resulted in slightly different emphases and concentrations by the two groups of countries in the subregion, the underlying concern for the promotion of human development provides a common theme which runs through each of the main areas of concentration.

The regional programme also serves the critical function of providing a regional dimension to country programmes. Specifically, of the priorities given by Governments for the regional programme to date: 17 countries have country programmes with areas of concentration in critical poverty and social development, 14 in State modernization, 16 in modernization of the productive sector, 8 in environment and development and 1 in drugs and development. In addition, several Caribbean countries have country programmes with areas of concentration conforming to these priorities.

III. AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

Regional programme priorities

The first area of concentration is poverty alleviation and social development. Under this area, it is envisaged that the contribution of ongoing activities will be built on and expanded. UNDP support will help Governments develop and implement programmes which link macroeconomic policy-making with social policy; develop gender-sensitive regional activities

addressing issues of the rural and urban poor, including access to education, health and other social services; promote research on strategies of how the poor organize themselves to survive; develop, in conjunction with relevant intermediaries such as informal groups and NGOs, better communication mechanisms between Governments and the poor; and promote initiatives that address specific requirements of Indian peoples, recognizing their traditions and culture.

A second and related area of concentration, governance: the State and civil society, will entail the development of regional programmes which will concentrate on strengthening democratization, including modernization and decentralization of the public sector giving particular emphasis to fiscal control and accountability, improved social policy management and equity, deregulation and privatization, as well as strengthening the decision-making process on multilateral issues such as environment. This will involve the assessment and promotion of exchange of experiences on these issues. Human rights, law and representation (parliaments and councils) issues will be addressed, as guided by such government action as the protocols emanating from the December 1992 Central American Presidential Summit.

A third area of concentration is proposed as modernization of the productive sector, innovation and competitiveness. Here, it is envisaged that the UNDP will promote technological innovation to achieve global competitiveness, including the management of industrial property for these purposes and establish and deepen linkages between research, technological infrastructures and productive activities. Links with ongoing programmes such as Bolivar and Paradigma will be sought. The analysis of demand will precede the setting of guidelines for action. Changes in the cultural environment of science and technology with reference to human development and the relationship between the research communities and the enterprise, as well as promotion of organizational technology, will be sought.

It is proposed that integration and international economic relations will constitute a fourth area of concentration where the region's bargaining and negotiating capacities and capabilities can be further enhanced. It is envisaged that the regional programme will support these efforts through facilitating the examination, negotiation and follow-up work in the GATT-Uruguay round negotiations, including assisting in launching a "Latin trade" programme, United States trade, debt and investment policy for the region in the context of the Enterprise for the Americas initiative, Europe 1992, the Pacific Basin and integration and trade within the region. The development of methodologies of periodic assessment and evaluation of integration and dissemination of this information will be sought.

The fifth area of concentration objective is environment and development. UNDP proposes to assist countries to design and implement development strategies that are ecologically sustainable. Development support will be provided for policy formulation, the development of human and institutional capabilities and resource mobilization. The goal is to maintain the optimum, stable functioning of ecosystems in critical environments -

forests, islands, wetlands, coastal zones - while optimizing production of goods and services. As the majority of the region's population lives in cities, the urban environment will be a target of special concern.

A growing constraint to development in the region has defined the sixth area of concentration proposed as drugs and development. Together with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the Governments of the region, a dialogue on the implications of the drug issues on development will be expanded. It is expected that regional programme support will help in the articulation of a regional strategy based on a macroeconomic assessment of the impact of drug activities on the economies of the region.

In addition to these priorities, the Caribbean Governments have requested that specific attention be given to disaster response, preparedness and management. The human immune deficiency virus (HIV) and the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) constitute another development problem in the Caribbean which will be addressed by the programme. There were 2,235 AIDS cases identified in the Caribbean as at September 1991.

IV. REGIONAL PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Because these priorities represent a wide cross-section of the major issues faced by Governments of the region, it has been necessary for the regional programme to devise a strategic approach that will permit its activities to give each sufficient support in each area of concentration to make a difference to Governments. To meet this requirement, the regional programme will concentrate on support to key functions needed for Governments to strengthen their capacity to implement development policies in these priority areas.

The first function is the development of a regional vision or common perspective on major policy issues. While each country has unique characteristics, the sharing of experiences with respect to common concerns and common interests will permit not only a learning process but also a "demonstration effect" which can buttress government initiatives. This demonstration effect, for example, has been in evidence in the almost universal movement towards democracy by most Governments in recent years.

The second function is to see that an evolving regional vision is based on up-to-date information and analysis. Thus, the regional programme will support exchanges of experience and research activities designed to inform the policy dialogue within Governments. However, given the limited funds of the programme, the strategy here will be to help guide and coordinate these activities, including the basic research of universities, research institutes, government bodies, the private sector and NGOs. The ultimate goal is that this information can contribute to the formulation of national and regional policies and efficient institutional mechanisms.

To summarize the strategy of regional programme technical cooperation: The regional programme serves the societies of Latin America and the Caribbean by helping them to develop a regional vision based on common interests and concerns. An example was bringing together top-level politicians and scientists to prepare and present "Our Own Agenda" which has become a basic document in the discussion of regional environmental issues. The response has been manifested by numerous technical cooperation projects initiated, and substantial external funding mobilized. The essence of the regional programme is this model of (1) facilitating development of a regional vision, (2) leading to technical cooperation activities, and (3) contributing to the policy dialogue within countries and within the region.

Mobilization of other resources and coordination arrangements

Given the scale and scope of the development problems confronting the region, another component of the implementation strategy is the use of the earmarked resources in a catalytic manner. It is expected that by programming the available resources creatively, and in close consultation with national Governments, regional institutions, bilateral and multilateral donors, resources in excess of the IPF earmarking of $30 million can be mobilized so that a total programme of about $70 million is envisaged.

V. RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

The regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, as endorsed by the Collective Consultation in New York in January 1992, and developed in close consultation with individual Governments, agencies and other international entities, is fully compatible with the mandates of UNDP as proposed by the Governing Council 's Decision 90/34. The programme is expected to contribute to enhanced intercountry cooperation at the regional and subregional levels in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Administrator recommends that the Governing Council approve the fourth regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean.